

**AN EXPLORATION OF THE USE OF AFRICAN PROVERBS AND METAPHORS
IN A VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN COURSE**

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ABSTRACT

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This study was envisioned to investigate and improve multicultural education in a visual communication design course. It aims to explore the educational use of proverbs for the benefit of improving multicultural teaching and learning. Proverbs and metaphors are an essential source for the composition of visual narratives. Overall results of this study revealed that, even though proverbs are a significant part of the experience of black African students, the students seldom directly use narratives and proverbs as inspiration for their designs. The political and historical history of the violation of human rights and the deliberate destruction of culture in South Africa has an effect on reconstructing a black African identity.

Visual communication design is a product of modernism and is driven by capitalism. African culture, as is the case with many other cultures, losing out on many fronts to the dominant global western capitalistic culture.

The capacity in the multicultural education of staff could also be developed in a research process. The grounded theory approach used in this study proved to be a vehicle for learning for both the lecturer and the student. This study particularly aims to open up areas for further research in multicultural teaching and learning.

May 2007

DECLARATION

I declare that *An exploration of the use of African proverbs and metaphors in a visual communication design course* (2006-7) is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Elmarie Costandius

May 2007



Signed _____

CONTENTS

Title page	i
Key words	ii
Abstract	iii
Declaration	iv
Section 1 Introduction	1
Section 2 Literature review	3
Section 3 Research methodology	11
Section 4 Data collection	14
Section 5 Discussion and conclusions	22
References	27
Appendixes	31



SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

My interest in the field of study dealt with in this paper started with my teaching of multicultural groups of students taking the visual communication design course at the Fine Arts Department of Stellenbosch University in South Africa. My interest was also stimulated whilst organising a community interaction programme for students and teaching art to black African¹ youth in Kayamandi township (a suburb of Stellenbosch) over the last three years. Experiencing the cultural differences helped me to realise that there are some profound multicultural differences within a class situation. This realisation prompted me to re-evaluate my own position as a lecturer. My previous methods of teaching did not necessarily incorporate alternative viewpoints in teaching methodology. The motivation for this study stems from a realisation that an alternative view is needed to accommodate students with different cultural backgrounds in a classroom situation.

At the Design Indaba² conferences during the last 10 years, it has been clear that many designers draw inspiration from a combination of cultures, and that many white African designers draw inspiration from black African traditions. While teaching black African students, I have often wondered why they do not draw more on their own cultural richness for inspiration for designs. During the apartheid years, white Afrikaner³ students failed to draw on their own cultural heritage because it was perhaps seen as something of which they could not justifiably be proud. Currently, however, the *Voortrekkerkappie* (a bonnet worn by white Afrikaner women in the 17th and 18th centuries) appears both in visual communication and in fashion design. Afrikaans proverbs are now also seen more often in visual communication. Symbols of the Afrikaner past are being appropriated, used as inspiration and transformed into current South African design developments. This process developed spontaneously after the 1994 democratic elections as a form of relief felt by many Afrikaans people about the demolishing of the apartheid system.

¹ For the purpose of this paper, I use the terminology “black African” and “white African”, even though I see all people living in Africa as Africans. When I use the term “black African”, I refer to people speaking an indigenous African language, such as isiXhosa or isiZulu, as their mother tongue. My use of the term does not include reference to those who, under the previous regime in South Africa, were referred to as “coloured” people. Under the current regime, “black” refers to people of both “black African” and “coloured” descent, namely all those who were disadvantaged by the previous system on the basis of race. “White”, in terms of the present regime, refers to those who were previously advantaged.

² The Design Indaba conference takes place annually in Cape Town. Local and international designers are invited to talk about their design work and research.

³ I use the term “white Afrikaner” to refer to a person of mostly Dutch descent who speaks Afrikaans.

Visual communication is a product of modern capitalist society which developed mostly in a western (European and American) context. The strong colonial influences that came with the Dutch and British occupation of the Cape colony brought with it a western orientation. In comparison it was not prominent in the black African culture, because black Africans were kept separate and poorly integrated and educated under the apartheid regime. Stellenbosch University was historically and still is dominated by Afrikaans-speaking students, an environment not necessarily accommodating of other cultures.

With this paper, I aim to explore the use of proverbs in a visual communication design environment for the benefit of improving multicultural teaching and learning. I chose to focus on black African proverbs because, although African languages are rich in proverbs and metaphors, they are not regularly used for educational purposes or, particularly in this course, as inspiration for visual communication.

The following four key research themes are addressed in this paper:

- The black African cultural richness of proverbs and metaphors
- The educational value of proverbs
- The historical and political factors influencing black African students' capacity to draw on their own culture for inspiration
- The learning theories related to multicultural teaching and learning

I am drawing on the grounded method of research where theory emerges and is discovered from data which is collected (Seale, 2006:507). I have conducted several semi-structured interviews with a lecturer and a small group of four black African students from the Visual Communication Design Department. Observations were also used to explore the students' sources of inspiration and conceptual development, with some interview questions being so informed. One of the limitations of this paper is that I am writing from the perspective of an outsider, a white African, about an aspect of black African culture. It is exactly this limitation, however, that has motivated me to carry out the research. To compensate for this limitation, I invited a black African colleague to act as monitor.

The following section of this paper constitutes a literature review, where the key concepts of the study are explained and the literature on the concepts is discussed. In the section on research

design and methodology, the key research questions are explained, as well as the methods used in gathering the data. The results are examined in the section on data collection and discussion. In the last section, closing arguments are presented and conclusions are drawn which could open areas for further research.

SECTION 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is arranged according to the key research themes. Firstly, literature on the rich world of African proverbs and metaphors is investigated. Secondly, literature on the educational role of proverbs is reviewed. Thirdly, the historical and political factors influencing black African students in a multicultural educational environment are examined. Lastly, the literature on learning theories with a reference to the socio-cultural learning theory, African indigenous knowledge (AIK) and multicultural teaching and learning is presented.

The black African cultural richness of proverbs and metaphors

In the following paragraphs I will explore the rich world of African proverbs and metaphors. Authors such as Mokitimi (1997), McKenna (1974), Penfield and Duru (1988), Kuzwayo (1998) and Prahlad (1999) have contributed to the debate on proverbs. Mokitimi (1997:xii) remarks that many proverbs act as catalysts of knowledge, wisdom, philosophy, ethics and morals. Proverbs are used mostly orally. Penfield and Duru (1988:119) call this the “social mode of communication” in oral societies and describe proverbs as “not only reflective of life but part of life”. Kuzwayo (1998:15) points out that the Nguni proverb “*Motho ke motho ka motho yo mongwe*” (meaning “A person is a person through others”) is a description of the African way of life, also referred to as *ubuntu* (meaning “humanness” if directly translated). Kuzwayo (1998:20) also points out, however, that the study of proverbs can be seen as old-fashioned and retrograde, but he remains convinced that “many problems are caused by lack of cultural pride and values”.

Books edited by John Mbiti contribute to several series documenting the proverbs of Southern African countries, such as the book by Mokitimi (1997) on Basotho proverbs in Lesotho. Proverbs in languages such as isiZulu (Nyembenzi, 1963) and isiXhosa (Mahlasela, 1982) serve as documentation of African traditions. The master’s thesis by Ntsanwisi (1965) on Tsonga idioms is

a complete study not only of the meaning but also of the linguistic structure of proverbs. He also describes the related fields of proverbs and idioms. Ntsanwisi (1965:2) points out the importance of scientific study of the traditional literary form of idioms to conserve and document the rich cultural heritage inherent in this.

Domowitz (1992:82) writes that the Akan group of the Ivory Coast regards “proverbs as central to the art of public speaking”. Domowitz (1992) further argues that there is a close connection between visual and verbal communication and that women, for instance, wear a certain cloth with a particular pattern derived from a proverb to communicate a message to a husband or a “co-wife” (in the context of a polygamist society) or to show suffering or injustice. Proverbs in themselves are depersonalised in nature: they protect the sender of the message.

The African cultures and languages are rich in heritage and metaphors which can be employed successfully in visual communication. African oral communication is especially rich in proverbs, which it disseminates into African culture. There are good examples of African influences on and slogans in the visual communication design field in South Africa, for example “*Simunye*” in isiXhosa, which means “We are one”. This slogan was introduced after the 1994 elections for a nation-building campaign in South Africa. Currently, black designers in the visual communication field are scarce, which obviously makes it difficult to influence the current visual language. Designers all over the world are influenced by global trends which are dominated by a western capitalist system. These influences are discussed in further detail in the subsection on factors influencing the learning of black African students.

The educational value of proverbs

Proverbs are based on symbolic or metaphorical language. Metaphors used as an aspect of a teaching method could be effective because they could enhance the conceptualisation of abstract ideas. Metaphors reveal only part of the answers and learners could be actively involved in completing and understanding the meaning of metaphors. Proverbs encourage a curiosity about their meanings. They also exert pressure or, at the least, suggest that ideas should be related to prior knowledge and experience (Entwistle, 2000). Proverbs communicate in a symbolic way, which is not direct or literal. Proverbs conceal and reveal information and often leave one with a question that one has to answer oneself. Proverbs function metaphorically in the same way that visual communication design does. A designer can therefore use proverbs as they are in the written

form or in combination with images that add meaning. Proverbs can also be interpreted literally in a visual form; a designer can find symbols or metaphors for proverbs. This creates a double-metaphor process, as can be seen in the cloths of the Akan people (Domowitz, 1992), where symbols, such as a basket and a bird, are used together to communicate a certain proverb. In both proverbs and visual communication, symbols or signs aim to communicate multiple meanings simultaneously through the use of only a word or words and/or an image.

In African languages, proverbs are used consciously to educate and to manipulate and persuade. McKenna (1974) describes proverbs as a way in which society warns its members of the dangers of life. According to Daniel, Smitherman-Donaldson and Jeremiah (1987), proverbs are central to abstract thinking and reasoning. Kuzwayo (1998:14) points out that, to correct behaviour, a child can be sent off with a proverb to decipher in order to do some soul-searching. According to Boateng (1983:332), a proverb conveys a message in a way in which a child also learns to reflect on the possible meanings of the proverb. It is an indirect way of teaching through which a child does not feel bombarded by rules. Boateng (1983:332) further remarks that ancestors play an important role in giving the proverb strength, in that a phrase such as “It is the ancestors that said...” is sometimes used before a proverb. Boateng (1983:331) points out that proverbs are “validators of traditional procedures and beliefs” and warns that the rejection of black African heritage will leave the black African with a feeling of lost identity. Kuzwayo (1998) suggests that traditional teachings, such as the use of proverbs, should be included in the educational curriculum.

Daniel et al. (1987:482) state that proverbs “offer wisdom but could also give contradictory advice”. Schipper (1991) shows the possible damaging side of proverbs. Her study focuses on how women globally are projected negatively in proverbs, and includes a section on African proverbs about women. In her study, she could not find any negative proverb aimed at African men but found numerous examples about women, such as “Never marry a woman with feet bigger than your own” (Schipper, 1991:4), which warns a man not to marry a woman more intelligent than himself. As a reflection, she admits that proverbs taken out of context without a good analysis of the full meaning could complicate validity. Schipper also remarks that negative proverbs about African men might exist but that anthropological and sociological studies have focused on the man’s view of society more than on the woman’s view of it. An article by Bewaji and Ramose (2003:414) refers to Bolaji Olukemi Olayinka, who writes from within the Yoruba culture,

concentrated in Nigeria, and looks at the “suppression of women by men expressed in Yoruba proverbs”. These concerns beg the question of whether all proverbs should be used as an instructional or educational tool without an analysis of the underlying generalisations and assumptions in the society in which they are used.

The historical and political factors influencing the learning of black African students

Difficulties in the learning environment of black African students have been the result of several factors, the first of which is the damaging impact of colonialism and apartheid education and the economical systems that accompanied these political systems. Sayad and Jansen (2001:272) describe South Africa’s education policy as a “struggle for the achievement of a broad political symbolism to mark the shift from apartheid to post-apartheid society”. The economical disadvantages of separate development that black African people experienced under apartheid had devastating effects for their access to education. The level of Bantu education introduced in 1952 (Africa, 2006) was substandard and under-financed, and learners were forced to learn in a language foreign to them. All students interviewed went to “black” primary schools before moving to a mixed secondary school. Maake (1992) specifically looks at the linguistic and imperialistic domination of English and Afrikaans in comparison to the other official languages in South Africa. Black African languages, like other indigenous languages, have to bow to the domination of English as the dominating global language.

Secondly, in colonialism times and during apartheid African culture has been relegated to a position secondary to that of western culture – a perception which could still be present in the minds of black African students. Africa (2006:312) describes South African history in terms of two eras – pre-1994 and post-1994 - and describes the educational landscape, public higher education institutions and the skewed educational landscape of pre-1994. A lack of confidence and the undervaluing of one’s own culture could be consequences of the devastating denial of African culture in the past. The inherited western educational system in South Africa has also influenced the contents of art history, which focused on European history while African art was ignored. The current popular struggle aims to regain the rightful place of African culture and indigenous knowledge in order to reclaim African confidence and sense of identity.

Thirdly, the current domination of global capitalism also influences the learning of black African students. Suarez-Orozco (2004:196) states that the domination of American youth culture has been

driven by global media: films, television, music and the internet as well as global branding by, for example, Nike and Coca-Cola. Suarez-Orozco (2004:196) also states that identity confusion may be spreading under youths influenced by global media. South Africa has been swept along by a powerful western capitalist system which influences all aspects of everyday life including visual communication. Visual communication has developed within a middle class society mostly in bigger urban centres where businesses flourish and where the need to sell products and ideas became prominent. Visual communication design started because of marketing and the need to sell products. Most examples that visual communication students see around them are influenced by western design styles. Any small cultural group, including African culture, finds it difficult to stand up against the dominant global western culture. This is even more true for a visual communication designer because the roots of graphic design lies in western modernism.

Fourthly, the changing environment of people moving from rural to urban areas can lead to possible changes in how cultural traditions are interpreted and mobilised. Jadezweni (2007) warns that some of the *ubuntu* or communal aspects are no longer relevant because of the different experiences and surroundings that an urban person might be exposed to. Ziehl (2002) further argues that most black South Africans living in metropolitan areas have adopted urban traditions. In his study, however, Russell (2004) argues that traditional⁴ kinship continues in urban areas in a way similar to that in rural areas, with neighbours and friends as the extended family. Some African traditions, according to Russell, are still valid in spite of urbanisation. Daniel et al. (1987) ask whether proverbs, even though they still exist in African urban societies, will survive in the environment of a changing globalised, modern world. The influence of urbanisation could, in fact, result in new proverbs developing but it could also weaken the importance of proverbs in societies.

The learning theories related to multicultural teaching and learning

The first theory, the socio-cultural perspective, argues that learning takes place in social interaction more than in the individual him/herself. People are moulded by their social environments. Wenger (1998) puts forward the idea of collective learning and introduces the concept of “communities of practice”. Communities of learning have been recognised as ideal learning environments by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, who, in 1991, also introduced the

⁴ The use of the term “traditional” should be interpreted not as referring to historical practices but to cultural practices continuing and progressing at present.

concept of communities of practice in reference to related aspects in the educational and business world. Wenger confirms the importance of the concept by saying that learning, rather than being an entirely individual endeavour, is primarily a communal experience. Such learning refers to participation in a specific social environment rather than to the gathering of information by any specific individual. Wenger adds that knowledge is not owned by an individual but is rather a developing property of a particular group. The socio-cultural perspective on communities of learning considers how such communities support social interaction within the learning environment as an essential part of the learning experience.

Vygotsky (1978) argues that collective meaning develops through negotiation, which leads to the development of shared knowledge. Boykin, Jagers, Ellison & Albury, (1997) in the study on communalism, found that black African students are superior in co-operative learning. Jadezweni (2007) confirms that black African students do better at group work than white African students. Group discussions on the other hand, Jadezweni (2007) remarked, are different: because of African politeness, black students in general wait to be prompted before taking part in a group discussion. The outcomes-based educational system also endorses the notion of group work. The use of *we* instead of *I* links with group work, where the responsibility to succeed rests not on the individual alone but on everybody within the group.

Related to group work is what Vygotsky (1978) calls the zone of proximal development (ZPD). The ZPD is the difference between what students can do alone and what they can do with assistance. It can be argued that in group learning, in a ZPD or during a facilitation process students can reach a higher level of learning and understanding.

The second theory revolves around the inclusion of African Indigenous Knowledge (AIK) in multicultural educational curricula in South Africa. Several researchers, such as Kamwangamalu (1999), Van Wyk and Higgs (2004), Waghid (2004), Hoberg (2004), Le Roux (2000), Nakusera (2004) and Venter (2004), have argued that the African philosophy of learning can be used to enhance educational practices. Venter (2004:156) argues for the inclusion of the *ubuntu* view in education. As mentioned earlier, *ubuntu* means “humanness” when translated. Mbiti (cited in Van der Walt, 1997:33) explains the concept of *ubuntu* as “I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am”, which relates to the expression “a person can only be a person through others”. Venter (2004:156) also argues for the teaching of humanity and calls on educators to teach

humanity with the emphasis on *humanness* instead of *race*. Mapesela (2004) asks whether indigenous knowledge is understood well enough to be included in the curriculum, and stresses that indigenous knowledge changes all the time with changing circumstances. Bitzer (2001), in a case study, looks at how co-operative learning relates to *ubuntu* and outcomes-based education. Tisani (2004) outlines several studies done on indigenous knowledge systems (IKSs) in South Africa and mentions that the National Research Foundation has identified IKSs as a focus area. Brand (2004) argues for the inclusion of African languages in the educational curriculum, from which indigenous knowledge would follow naturally. Languages, according to Brand (2004:27), are not “neutral and interchangeable” and cannot be separated from knowledge and culture. Le Grange (2004:82) asks whether “western epistemologies and indigenous knowledges are competing perspectives, or complementary frameworks”. He warns against, on the one hand, the overprotection of an existing system and, on the other hand, the over-romanticising of indigenous knowledge. Enslin and Horsthemke (2004) offer an alternative view of *ubuntu* and criticise the publicity created around *ubuntu*. They point out that *ubuntu* is a universal concept that is present in all cultures. Indigenous knowledge has been researched also in New Zealand, Australia, Canada and South America, and in 1994 and 1995 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) sponsored conferences for the protection of indigenous knowledges (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999:344).



The third theory is that of multicultural education, which includes the theories of learning in socio-cultural environments and indigenous knowledge. To enable multicultural education, the social environment of the student, which includes indigenous knowledge, has to be taken into account. Hernandez (1989:4) describes multicultural education as a perspective that recognises the political, social and economic realities as well as diverse cultures, races, genders, ethnicities and religions within the curriculum and classroom practices.

Interest in the multicultural education approach started in the 1960s in America in accordance with the civil rights movements (Sleeter & Grant, 1994:168). The main pillars of multicultural education, according to Sleeter and Grant (1994:170), are cultural pluralism and equal opportunity. Equal opportunity is a legal and democratic right. Jacobsen (1999:230) refers to the theories of Dewey, who was concerned with the role of educational institutions in providing students the disposition to sustain a democratic way of life. According to Jacobsen (1999:169), ideology regarding multiculturalism has been formalised in the human rights constitution of how it ought to

be, but the “theory of social systems or human psychology” has not been widely investigated. The same can be said of the limitations in theories for multicultural education in South Africa. Hemson (2006:3) remarks that “[l]ittle research has been done on actual programmes addressing diversity.” Hemson (2006:4) refers to writers such as Waghid (2004) who address inequality to understand forms of privileging and exclusion.

Sleeter & Grant refer to Newman (1994:176) who discussed theories of cultural pluralism that include assimilation, amalgamation, classical cultural pluralism and modified cultural pluralism. Assimilation occurs where the minority is dominated by the majority. Newman uses the formula “ $A + B + C = A$ ” (1994:177) where ‘A’ represents the majority. Amalgamation is where “ $A + B + C = D$, where ‘D’ represents a synthesis of groups into a new group” (1994:178). For this theory to work, the groups need to be of equal status and willing to amalgamate. The classical cultural pluralism theory holds that cultural groups maintain their identities, and Newman (1994:178,9) uses the formula of “ $A + B + C = A + B + C$ ” to explain this. Modified cultural pluralism (1994:179) holds that cultural diversity will continue to exist in spite of attempts to assimilate or amalgamate.



Section summary

The rich world of African proverbs and metaphors can be further utilised in literature and visual communication. There has been an active process of documenting African proverbs and culture to ensure the recording, and to a certain extent the survival, of traditions. However, because of urbanisation these traditions are mostly replaced by new technology and modern life. Western capitalist culture has a uniform effect on other cultures and it would be a pity if the rich tradition of African culture disappears slowly, being replaced by modern capitalist culture. Urbanisation is not the only reason why black African culture has been disrupted. The political and historical history of the violation of human rights and the deliberate destruction of culture still has an effect on people reconstructing a black African identity.

Proverbs can be used as an educational tool because it encourages abstract thinking and reasoning (Daniel et al., 1987). It is also a generative tool to open up cultural differences and discussions on multiculturalism. This type of group work is encouraged by the socio-cultural learning theories, which argue that a person is moulded more by social interactions than individual processes. The theory of inclusion of indigenous knowledge is important because with student-centred learning

the cultural background of students needs to be taken into account. An African philosophy of learning (Venter, 2004:155) can also be derived from traditional African thought or indigenous knowledge systems. By looking at these themes, a further exploration and rethinking of multicultural teaching and learning can take shape.

SECTION 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Because of the relatively unexplored field of multicultural teaching and learning in praxis in South Africa and the complexity of the cross-cultural study, a research method was chosen to open up the field for further research and discussion on multicultural education.

Method

The method of participatory research or action research (PAR) is employed since it involves the participants as an integral part of the research (Mouton:2001:150). Grounded theory has been used as a research approach for this study. The complex nature and the relatively unexplored area of multicultural teaching and learning in South Africa require a grounded theory and inductive approach where theories could emerge in the process of re-examining and repeated data collection (Seale, 2004:241). Denzin (in Seale, 2004:246), in a more postmodern approach, reminds us to look at theories used in everyday life and to look for individual characteristics of particular cases instead of making broad generalisations. This study therefore considers individual cases with the aim of illuminating areas for future investigation.

Preliminary information for the interviews with the students was collected through a discussion with a black African lecturer (see Appendix 1). This discussion informed the type of themes discussed in the student interviews. I have chosen the specific questions because they served not only as a platform to work from but also as a basis for my own understanding of black African culture and multicultural teaching and learning. From this initial discussion, I formed the concept that was discussed in the student interviews. Apart from the interviews, I also drew on my years of teaching experience by observing and analysing the students' sources of inspiration and process of concept development. This participant observation further informed some of the questions that I used in the interviews.

Sampling

A small group of four black African students at the Fine Arts Department was interviewed. The small sample was chosen because of the limited timeframe for this study. The sample included a variety of students: one was from Zimbabwe and spoke Shona; the other three were from South Africa and spoke either isiXhosa or isiZulu. The students interviewed were one second-year, one third-year and two fourth-year students. The assumption was that fourth-year students would be more likely to draw on their own culture because they would probably feel more at ease with themselves and their environment. The gender disparity in the choice of three male students and one female was due to the limited number of students available for the study.

Data collection

With the permission of the participants, all the interviews were tape-recorded. The recordings proved to be a check for my initial interpretation of the interviews: instances that I understood in certain ways during the interviews were revealed to be based on false interpretations when I listened to the recordings. The recordings were examined and the information related to the topic was extracted and categorised according to the themes. Similar quotes were grouped under each theme and those that occurred frequently were used for the study. Originally, more diverse themes emerged but ultimately these five main themes were decided upon: the value of black African traditions, specifically proverbs, in students' lives and visual communication studies; the educational role of proverbs in students' lives, currently or in the past; the domination of western and global design approaches; the shifting nature of culture; and the difficulties in coping in a multicultural environment in the classroom. These themes were also used as the main topics for discussion in the interviews.

The interviews with two of the students whom I knew from a class situation proved to be easy because there was already a certain amount of trust and familiarity. These interviews lasted an average of 35 minutes each. The interviews with the other two students required two sessions (see Appendices 2 and 3) each because the first sessions were more of an introduction and aimed at creating a familiar environment. The repetition proved to be valuable because the students and I had time to reflect or elaborate on the questions and answers. Information revealed in the first

round of interviews also informed further investigation in the second round of interviews. The interviews took place over a period of one month.

The themes for the second interviews were more specific and focused on the research topic. The interviews were an average of 81 minutes in duration. It started with a discussion on how they feel about their own culture and whether they are drawing on it for inspiration. The second theme revolved around design as a product of modernism and therefore mostly dominated by western capitalism. The theme of the shifting nature of culture was included because the students came from diverse backgrounds moving from rural to urban areas. All students attended “black” primary schools with their own language as language of instruction but went to a double-medium secondary school where they had English or Afrikaans as language of instruction.

Validity

The colleague and students that contributed to the research were fully briefed and their participation was voluntary. To protect the identities of students and colleagues I have not revealed the names of the participants. The information provided by my colleague and the students will be kept confidential. Personal confessions were made in interviews. These confessions, which could harm the reputation of any of the four students, will not be shared with other lecturers. The very first interview took place in the student’s own workplace, but this arrangement became problematic because of the other students in the studio. (Studios are open 24 hours a day and it was difficult to schedule a time when there were no students.) I also did not want to create the impression that I am distinguishing between students, especially those whom I taught. I then decided to use my office, which was more private but less familiar to the students. This could have influenced students’ responses.

A black African colleague was invited to act as a check and was briefed on the research. The importance of this colleague’s task increased during the interview period: what started out as the role of an observer turned into that of a full participant in the last two interviews. Instead of only analysing the recorded interviews afterwards, the colleague became part of the interviews and helped to intervene and pick up leads that guided further investigation. These interventions also proved that the limitations of a white African researching an aspect of black African culture are problematic. For example, during the interviews, reference was made to a ghost, which in isiXhosa could mean either a shadow or a ghost. I had been unaware of the double meaning, which changed

the context of the remark. Being an educator herself, my colleague understood what I was trying to determine better than the students did. This made me realise that this research could possibly have been more valuable if the interviews had been conducted with black African lecturers instead of students.

Shortcomings

One of the shortcomings of the study is that I am writing from a white African perspective investigating an aspect of black African culture. Being aware of this limitation, I have invited a black African colleague to work with me on the study and to act as a check.

We communicated in English, which is both the students' and my second language. By communicating in a second language, information could have been distorted because of language limitations, misunderstanding or wrong interpretation. Brand (2004:27) argues that culture is mainly contained in language. The connotation that students might have with a language such as English or Afrikaans could also influence their ability to trust and reveal information, and in this case to reveal information to me as an Afrikaans-speaking lecturer.

I would not suggest that the small sample of four students represents all African art students in South Africa. The research investigates four individual students with the aim of opening up the field for further research in order to improve multicultural teaching and learning.

SECTION 4: DATA COLLECTION

In this section, examples of quotes from students (see Table 1) are provided and the information extracted from the interviews is discussed. The data collected in the interviews was qualitative in nature. The first examples of quotes relate to the value of black African traditions, such as proverbs, in the students' current lives, and to the educational role of proverbs in their lives, currently or in the past. Quotes about students' experience of the domination of western and global design approaches follow. Then quotes regarding the shifting nature of culture and students' ability to cope in their current learning environment are presented. These categories will be discussed further in the paragraphs following Table 1.

In Table 1 I have used numbers instead of names to differentiate between the students. Student 1 is female and in her third year. Student 2 is male and in his second year. Students 3 and 4 are both male and in their fourth year. I also have included quotes from my colleague who participated in the study under number 5. The numbers appear in brackets just after the quote.

Table 1: Quotes from student interviews

Themes	Quotes from students
The value of African traditions (specifically proverbs) in students' current lives	<p><i>Young people do not read and write Zulu anymore. (1)</i></p> <p><i>I do not feel sorry that I am not practising my Zulu culture. (1)</i></p> <p><i>I have used a proverb once in my artwork: 'When you touch a woman you strike a rock'. (1)</i></p> <p><i>Colours in the Zulu tradition has meaning, I have researched it. (1)</i></p> <p><i>I have started to learn more about my own culture when I came here. (1)</i></p> <p><i>Names in Zulu mean something, the name Ayanda for instance means enough growth. (1)</i></p> <p><i>We underestimate our own stuff that we have here [in South Africa]. (2)</i></p> <p><i>I photographed the initiation ritual but were scared to exhibit it because in my community it is regarded as sacred. (3)</i></p> <p><i>I connect with my roots and I have realised what my own identity was when I came to South Africa. (4)</i></p> <p><i>You have to know your culture well to draw on it, You have to keep in mind where you come from. (4)</i></p> <p><i>I am losing it [my culture] and in a way losing myself and forgetting a lot about myself. (4)</i></p> <p><i>Western culture is manners, while Shona culture is respect and consideration to others. (4).</i></p> <p><i>I went to a colonial [high] school but I tried to keep my [Shona] culture. (4)</i></p> <p><i>I do not think students know how to access their own culture for creative work. (5)</i></p>

<p>The educational role of proverbs in their lives, currently or in the past</p>	<p><i>Proverbs are used when they negotiate about lobola. (1)</i></p> <p><i>With the initiation process, elder men talked to us and gave us guidelines for life. They also used proverbs. (1)</i></p> <p><i>I think proverbs are used to explain to a young person what they have done wrong. (1)</i></p> <p><i>It [proverbs] is another form of understanding. (4)</i></p> <p><i>They [proverbs] are like lifesavers. I use my memory [of proverbs] as a support through my day. (4)</i></p> <p><i>It [proverbs] says something small but you think about a lot. (4)</i></p> <p><i>My mother talked a lot to us about life and often used proverbs when we worked in the fields. (4)</i></p> <p><i>White families say things point-blank; we [Shona people] speak on someone's behalf, not directly. (4)</i></p> <p><i>It [proverbs] makes you think – it is puzzling. (5)</i></p> <p><i>It [proverbs] created many visual pictures. (5)</i></p> <p><i>Proverbs have a moral story behind it, said in a few words. (5)</i></p> <p><i>Proverbs learned in school as parrot learning I have forgotten. It is the ones that was used at home that I remember. (5)</i></p>
<p>The domination of western and global design approaches</p>	<p><i>Every generation becomes more modernised and do not practise [African] culture. (1)</i></p> <p><i>Graphic design is based on international design – western based. (1)</i></p> <p><i>Young people grow up with television and do not know about their culture anymore. (1)</i></p> <p><i>I never use Zulu colours in my artwork – it is over-done. I think we have to move away from it and find our own style. (1)</i></p> <p><i>I think the interest in my own culture might come back [in future]. (1)</i></p> <p><i>Graphic design books in the library are from either Europe or America. (2)</i></p> <p><i>I want to create a new individual aesthetic. (3)</i></p> <p><i>We learn a lot about South African art in the art theory course. (4)</i></p>
<p>The shifting nature of culture</p>	<p><i>My strength lies in looking after my sisters and brothers at home. When I came here, I realised I have to look after myself. (1)</i></p>

	<p><i>Township people use their own slang language different from the university. (2)</i></p> <p><i>I have lost much of my Xhosa culture because I went to a 'coloured' school. All the culture was lost to me; I created a new township identity. (2)</i></p> <p><i>I have used inspiration from the township in my art, not specifically Xhosa culture. (2)</i></p> <p><i>In the township you think 'this culture is cool' and question your own culture, like why do I have to pay lobola? (2)</i></p> <p><i>I do not know what to do in my culture if I visit old people. (2)</i></p> <p><i>My generation is confused; I feel lost. (2)</i></p> <p><i>Traditional weddings are from the olden days but other traditions might stay. (2)</i></p> <p><i>I have to know the basics of my culture if my children ask me one day. (2)</i></p> <p><i>When I came here, I realised I have to do things alone, I have to walk alone [meant in a physical way]. (4)</i></p> <p><i>There is a saying in our culture 'Good things come to those who wait' but I have realised, here, you have to take it, otherwise someone else will. (4)</i></p> <p><i>People became more isolated [in townships]. The roles were more defined in traditional families. Men, women and children knew what was expected from them. (5)</i></p>
Coping in their current learning environment	<p><i>I was shocked when I realised I was the only black student of 90 first-year students. (1)</i></p> <p><i>Being black is too much in my face; I am first seen as a black Zulu woman then as an individual. My fellow students already have an expectation of what I am. (1)</i></p> <p><i>Being the only black person in my class, I feel left out. (1)</i></p> <p><i>I have to adapt because I am the only black student in the class. (1)</i></p> <p><i>I understand Afrikaans because my mother could afford to send me to a 'coloured' school. (2)</i></p>

	<p><i>If I use references like our music from the township, other students do not understand it. I have to conform so that it is understandable to them. (2)</i></p> <p><i>Using the word 'we' instead of 'you' will motivate the group to work together. (2)</i></p> <p><i>You can see yourself in a group, your strengths and weaknesses. (3)</i></p> <p><i>It is good to be independent but the class must have a common goal. (3)</i></p> <p><i>I took many pictures of myself to express 'African anger'. (3)</i></p> <p><i>Last year a lecturer started a black only support group, but I do not want to be singled out, I want to be taken as one of the group. (3)</i></p> <p><i>I do not see it as adapting; I see it as a change to learn something new or find a gap to meet others halfway. (4)</i></p>
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The value of black African traditions, specifically proverbs, in students' lives

The interviews started with the question of whether – and, if so, how – proverbs were used both in the students' childhood and in their lives now. The interviewees mentioned proverbs in connection with discussions and with someone wanting to convince someone else or to win an argument. They also mentioned proverbs used in songs and stories. Names in black African traditions are often given in the form of a metaphor. The name Ayanda, for instance, means “enough growth”. One student knows a family in which the children's names together form a rhyme and a narrative. She mentioned that, when her Zulu clan name or heritage is explained, it is done in a type of rhyme, which she sees as a form of a proverb.

The students furthermore mentioned proverbs in relation to traditions such as family feasts, *lobola*⁵ or initiation rituals. For example, proverbs are used to impress and persuade when *lobola* is discussed between the families of the bride and the groom. Proverbs are also used by family elders to reach a solution for any problems in a marriage. During initiation processes, the male elders use proverbs to inform the young men and to warn them about the dangers in life. An example is “*Indlovu ayisindwa ngumboko wayo*”, which means your problems are never too big for you to handle, so if you start something you must finish it. One student used the initiation ritual as a theme for a photographic project. The initiation process is perceived as a sacred ritual and the

⁵ *Lobola* is paid in the form of cows or, nowadays, money to the parents of the bride by the groom. The number or amount is negotiated between the elders of the two families.

student was initially scared to use it because he had been unsure of the response from his family and community. Two other students also used aspects of their cultures in their designs but felt that these were too “old-fashioned” and “not trendy”. One student used an African proverb when the brief was to use a proverb; this had been the result of being prompted and had not been applied in a metaphorical way.

When analysed, the student who drew most on his culture was the student from Zimbabwe. He remarked that he had become conscious of his own culture only when he was removed from it; if he had studied in Zimbabwe, he might not have drawn on his culture because he would have seen it as normal.

The educational role of proverbs in their lives, currently or in the past

The instructional use of proverbs was mentioned often by the interviewees. If a child has done something wrong, for example, a proverb is used to explain why it was wrong. The proverb is used as a puzzle that needs to be solved. One student mentioned how his grandmother talked to him using proverbs when they worked in the fields. It was those proverbs that he remembered and that he drew on for emotional strength. Only one of the students remembered his parents saying “The ancestors said ...” before quoting a proverb. This was used to give the proverb enough importance for the listener to take it seriously. The student mentioned that people were scared of ancestors and feared the punishment that followed if the ancestors were not obeyed. Two students had learned proverbs in school as part of their mother-tongue instruction; they no longer remembered these proverbs, however, because, according to them, they had had to learn them parrot-fashion, from a list and out of context. The concept of learning in context relates to the social-constructivist learning theory, which holds that one’s learning cannot be separated from one’s life. The Shona-speaking student remembered a teacher who used proverbs effectively to explain difficult concepts in maths. He also referred to books in Shona based on proverbs; a proverb at the beginning of a book could be broken down into many aspects or meanings in the novel as a whole. He furthermore recalled a game in which the first word or words of a proverb were given and the proverb then had to be completed.

According to the interviewees, the value of proverbs in education lay in the fact that they were puzzling and that the meaning could not be captured easily. Very often, language older than that used in modern, everyday speech was used in proverbs. One student remarked that proverbs

required the intellect to break down meanings and create another form of understanding within a bigger context. A visual picture was also constructed in the mind. She further mentioned that proverbs communicated in a personal way. Because the meanings of proverbs were often fully understood only later in life, proverbs were part of a long educational process that could stretch over years. A colleague stated that African “mamas” (mothers) often used proverbs that sometimes made her stop dead in her tracks. This use of proverbs then forced her to act differently.

The Zimbabwean interviewee mentioned prophets (known in South Africa as witch doctors, *sangomas* or traditional healers) whom he remembered walking around calling out proverbs. He particularly remembered a prophet wearing a garment made from newspapers, who called out “*Kana chiutsi chapera muchakohwa imi*”, which translates into “When the smoke clears, you will reap”. This type of prophecy, the interviewee mentioned, would no longer be tolerated in the current political environment. The garments, horns, beads, bones and bells used by prophets communicated visual messages to their communities.

The domination of western and global design approaches

In response to the question of whether the students felt that visual communication design was dominated by European and American approaches, one interviewee remarked that most of the books in the library that they used as inspiration were books from either Europe or America. Media such as television were seen as more accommodating of the students’ culture because other African languages were also used. The students remarked that they were satisfied with the art theory course, which included the visual art and design of South Africa and other African countries.

The shifting nature of culture

The interviewees argued that some old traditions were no longer valid but they were all concerned about certain cultural traditions dying out. For one interviewee, black African culture was all about respect for others and for nature. Two students mentioned respect towards others and elders as the most regrettable loss. The cause of current disrespect, one student remarked, was the examples that young people saw on television. Another student remarked that the use of *muti*⁶ from a *sangoma* or traditional healer to cure HIV/Aids is an example of traditions that could be replaced. One

⁶ *Muti* is the isiZulu word for traditional African medicine.

contradiction was revealed in the interviews: a student said that she did not want to use Zulu symbols in her work but later said that she felt it her duty, as a designer, to make people aware of her Zulu culture and that she would like to produce modern Zulu fairy tales based on old folk stories.

Another student felt that he had a township identity more than a Xhosa identity because he had attended a “coloured” school, where he had lost most of his Xhosa traditions and language. This student also pointed out that languages in the townships were changing because of the fusion of cultures and that new proverbs were being created in the process.

Coping in their current learning environment

The students, when asked about the use of proverbs in their society, often started to talk about their personal efforts to cope in their current environment, a topic that was not directly connected to the main theme of the study but that became relevant to some extent. One student remarked that she felt that being black was “too much in my face”. She felt that she was first seen as a black Zulu woman before being seen as an individual. Being the only black person in her group was a factor that strongly discouraged her from using her own cultural traditions.

The interviewees all stated that they often recalled stories and proverbs when in need of emotional support. However, they did not appear to access the rich oral tradition of African proverbs regularly as inspiration for visual communication. When required to draw on their own cultural backgrounds, the students involved in the study were able to do so with ease but when not required to do so they did not naturally refer to their own cultures for inspiration. Applying oral or written skills to visual representation was shown to require a different set of skills than the students had at their disposal.

Section summary

The responses of the students opened up several complex areas for further investigation. Based on the interviews, I recognised that students definitely value their culture but are somewhat hesitant to use their culture in their current situation. There is also a feeling of nostalgia and loss when they speak of their culture. Some experience their culture as old fashioned and would not use it in their designs, but others draw on it regularly. Proverbs are mostly something that they draw on when they need emotional support. All the students felt that they have become more aware of their

culture since coming to university. Mixing black African culture with the modern western world that they are faced with appears to be difficult. The students are doing everything in their power to adapt to their new environment. All the interviewed students have attended a high school at which they had their schooling in English or Afrikaans. This has eased the process of adjustment at university. Nevertheless, the adjusting process of black African students in a traditional Afrikaans environment will be problematic and complex.

SECTION 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The discussion that follows explores the results from the research based on the information set out in the previous section. The research has opened up several complex areas in the multicultural teaching and learning environment as well as in the complicated process of cross-cultural research. Conducting the research in a second language, with interviewees also communicating in a second language, makes the task difficult and – one could argue – unreliable. However, the aim of this study is to improve multicultural education in a visual communication course, to which end I started investigating these sensitive and complex issues. This study serves as an initial point of departure in order to improve the understanding of multicultural education in a historically Afrikaans learning environment.

Because of industrialisation and subsequent migration, many African societies have experienced social disruption and loss of social structure or unity. In the process, many traditions and indigenous knowledge in the form of narratives and proverbs have been neglected and have even been lost. The mechanisms for transmitting traditions have also been disrupted. The changing nature of culture also became prominent: some traditions are being upheld but most are abandoned when rural people are faced with urban lifestyles and modern technology. One of the interviewees remarked that languages in townships were changing because of the conglomeration of different cultures and languages. New collective proverbs may result because of this fusion and older ones may disappear. For example, the isiXhosa saying “*Unomsila*”, which literally means “He has a tail”, originally meant “He is dogged by bad luck” but now, according to the student, means “He is sly”. This indicates that a new way of communication or “fused language” is probably developing

faster where people from diverse backgrounds live in close proximity to one another in environments such as townships.

Moving from rural to urban has an impact on culture, but moving abroad might also have a positive and negative effect. Distancing one from one's own culture enables one to appreciate more easily the value of one's own culture. Such distancing can also trigger feelings of nostalgia, with pre-established customs coming to serve as emotional pillars. The Zimbabwean interviewee only realised the value of his Shona culture when he was at some geographical distance from its practitioners. Students coming from other regions in South Africa, such as the rural areas of the Eastern Cape, have mentioned an increased awareness of their own culture since they have come to Stellenbosch, but to a lesser extent, implying that a wider physical and emotional distance is possibly necessary for people to appreciate fully and draw on their own cultural richness.

An important insight emerged from the study, namely that the research ended up being not so much about "black" and "white" as about modernity and pre-modern, traditional life. The difference between those who have access to modernism and those who do not creates some tension. Visual communication design is a product of modernism. Those who have been exposed to modernism know how to access its resources. Among especially historically disadvantaged people in South Africa, access to resources such as modern technology has been limited. The fact that European art and design history has been the main component of most previous art and design history curricula in South Africa plays a role in the intellectual development of black African students in a visual arts course. European and American art and design was, and still tends to be, upheld as the ideal. However, the new curricula that include African and South African art and culture should transform this perception in future.

In addition to the apprehension of losing cultural traditions there is also the angst of not knowing the fast-changing, modern world. For the students there are no clear guidelines of what to keep and what to leave behind. Tensions between what is sacred and what is secular came out in the interviews: using rituals as inspiration could be seen as untouchable because of the fear of the violation of ancestors, according to Nii-Yartey (2007). Exposure to multiple cultural influences due to globalisation also offers a sometimes overwhelming choice of possible sources of one's inspiration, with African culture losing out on many fronts to the dominant American capitalistic culture, as is the case with many other cultures. Leonardo (2004:119) points out that western

culture and the domination of whiteness spreads with globalisation. If the students were to be asked in 10 years' time what proverbs they were using, they would probably not differ much because of the fusion of languages in their environments and, in a broader sense, the influences of globalisation. The students would also start to draw more from the same pool of inspiration and would find it more challenging to differentiate themselves in terms of style and concept.

In order to understand multicultural teaching and learning and the reasons why black African students would not draw on their own culture often, I had to consider historical and political factors of the past. Under colonialism and the apartheid regime, black African culture was violated and systematically disrupted and destroyed. In apartheid South Africa, cultures were deliberately kept apart and the richness of other cultures was completely overlooked, being seen as a threat to the hegemony of western culture. Bantu schooling systems under apartheid were poorly financed. During apartheid, language was used as a tool of oppression, and Afrikaans is still associated with oppression. Black African students studying at Stellenbosch University are faced with several difficulties in adjusting to a historically Afrikaans university environment.

The reconstruction of an identity is multifaceted. Experiencing one's culture being treated as secondary must have an influence on confidence and pride in one's own traditions. Black African students might naturally, in time, come to recognise their own cultural richness. The tendency of undervaluing one's own culture is prevalent, with cultural heritage seen as interesting only by those foreign to the culture – other people's culture often appearing to be more interesting than one's own. While no one should feel confined to drawing on her or his own culture for inspiration, ignoring the African richness of proverbs and metaphors would be a loss.

Proverbs encourage abstract thinking and reasoning (Daniel et al., 1987). The rich world of both African and western proverbs can be used as an educational tool which can be generative in promoting and starting a discussion about cultural differences in a multicultural environment. Proverbs have to be selected for classroom purposes because, as Daniel et al. (1987:482) warn, proverbs "offer wisdom but could also give contradictory advice", as is the case with proverbs that denigrate women.

In a classroom learning environment, proverbs can be used as a catalyst for interaction between students. This interaction can be used to explore the rich world of proverbs in both African and

other languages. This type of group interaction is also underpinned by the socio-cultural learning theories which promote learning in social groups over individual learning. Apart from the interaction that the use of proverbs can stimulate between cultural groups, it can also be a source of inspiration in visual communication design and enrich students' figurative and symbolic references because of its richness in metaphors.

In the reconsideration of this study, the entire process of investigation appears to be relatively thought-provoking. With the first set of interviews, a closer familiarity with the topic was obtained. The students started to gain confidence in their ability to articulate their responses effectively in interviews, in the validity of their experiences and in their artistic competence. During the interviews trust was gained in that what the students were saying was not being held against them when their projects were marked. They became ever more willing to discuss their difficulties as black African people operating within a predominantly white African environment. The interviews appeared to make them more aware of their own cultural richness and to foster a positive attitude towards their own cultures. The interest expressed in them, as well as the provision of an appropriate space in which to talk, argue and disagree about their use of their own traditions in their work, proved to be fruitful. Creating the space for black African students to talk about their experiences and insights in a predominantly Eurocentric world, as a means of enhancing their self-confidence, could be explored further.

The improvement of my own knowledge of African traditions led to a better understanding of how to accommodate and allow a space in the course curricula for African students to draw on their own traditions. The research process proved to be a vehicle for learning for the lecturer and the students. This type of investigation or discourse can serve as a learning process which could also encourage multicultural education exploration between lecturers or between students. The social-constructivist learning theory advocates learning that takes place through interaction in groups. Through this type of research, the multicultural education of staff members could be developed further. Working closely with my African colleague has opened up many learning opportunities. The grounded theory method used in this study served as a means to generate theories for multicultural teaching and learning but also as a learning opportunity for the researcher.

Leonardo (2004:118) advocates neo-abolitionist pedagogy, which suggests "that lecturers and students work together to name, reflect on, and dismantle discourses of whiteness". Neo-

abolitionism is not denying whiteness (Leonardo, 2004:132), but white lecturers and students and lecturers and students of colour have to work together actively to unpack multiculturalism. Leonardo (2004:132) concludes his article by stating that global pedagogy and neo-abolitionism “are not only acts of free speech but of praxis”.

Newman’s theory of assimilation, of a minority being dominated by a majority (Sleeter & Grant, 1994:176), relates to the current situation in the visual communication design course where black African students are in a minority. Amalgamation would be problematic because of status complexities caused by political and historical systems in the past. An ideal might be classical cultural pluralism, where all the cultures maintain their individuality. For imagination to flourish variation is necessary. A milieu where various cultures maintain their uniqueness, but integrate on an equal basis could be constructive for creativity.

The South African constitution, with its strong focus on human rights, is highly regarded and the ideology of multiculturalism is firmly laid down on paper and legal barriers removed. However, in everyday praxis, multicultural teaching and learning have not been investigated thoroughly enough. According to Hemson (2006:3), actual programmes have not been developed to actively address diversity in South Africa. Further research in multicultural teaching and learning is therefore needed.

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Appendix 1

PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW	
Person interviewed:	
Date:	
Place:	
PURPOSE OF RESEARCH	
The paper aims to explore the use of black African proverbs and how that translates, or not, into visual communication. Proverbs are explored because they make use of metaphors or symbols, which are often employed in visual communication, to attract and enhance attention. Four black African students in the visual communication design course will be interviewed.	
PURPOSE OF THIS INTERVIEW	
The aim is to explore a broad field of black African customs and traditions, which could be used to inform questions for further interviews with the four students.	
ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY	
All the participants in the research will be fully briefed and their participation will be voluntary. I will not use the names of the participants and will, in this way, protect their identities. The information from the students will be kept confidential and personal confessions in the interviews that could harm anyone's reputation will not be shared with others.	
THEMES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does the concept of kinship or <i>ubuntu</i> mean to you? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is an Afrocentric approach? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a black African perspective of self that is different from that of a white African perspective? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the spiritual world of the ancestors woven into the social selfhood? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have <i>ubuntu</i> and kinship changed with urbanisation? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a difference between a communal and an individual concept of self? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would it be difficult for a rural black person to go from a communal environment to an individualistic environment? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there negative aspects to <i>ubuntu</i> or kinship? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you feel a loss of black African cultural traditions? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is considered an ideal person in black African culture? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can <i>ubuntu</i> help in an educational system or is there a black African way of learning? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you do that is different in class from what a white African does? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you think that a multiculturally sensitive classroom requires different ways of teaching? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could a better accommodation of an African space be an empowering possibility for a black African student? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there specific authors, books or articles that I should read? 	

Appendix 2

FIRST INTERVIEW	
Person interviewed:	
Date:	
Place:	
PURPOSE OF RESEARCH	
The paper aims to explore the use of black African proverbs and how that translates, or not, into visual communication. Proverbs are explored because they make use of metaphors or symbols, which are often employed in visual communication, to attract and enhance attention. Four black African students in the visual communication design course will be interviewed.	
PURPOSE OF THIS INTERVIEW	
The aim is to explore a broad field of black African customs and traditions, which could be used to inform questions for further interviews with the four students.	
ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY	
All the participants in the research will be fully briefed and their participation will be voluntary. I will not use the names of the participants and will, in this way, protect their identities. The information from the students will be kept confidential and personal confessions in the interviews that could harm anyone's reputation will not be shared with others. A black African colleague will act as a check and will peer-review the interviews.	
INTRODUCTORY INTERVIEW THEMES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Background information of the person interviewed:• Mother tongue• Birth place• Schools attended – primary and secondary• Other	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you were born in a rural area, what are the differences that you experience between the rural and the urban environments?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the role of language, proverbs, idioms etc. in your family?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Would knowledge about black African culture be beneficial to a lecturer in teaching a black African student?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you see as indigenous knowledge?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are you drawing on your own stories, proverbs, metaphors or symbols in your design work? If so, give examples.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can a black African student be encouraged?	

Appendix 3

SECOND INTERVIEW	
Person interviewed:	
Date:	
Place:	
PURPOSE OF RESEARCH	
The paper aims to explore the use of black African proverbs and how that translates, or not, into visual communication. Proverbs are explored because they make use of metaphors or symbols, which are often employed in visual communication, to attract and enhance attention. Four black African students in the visual communication design course will be interviewed.	
PURPOSE OF THIS INTERVIEW	
The aim is to explore a broad field of black African customs and traditions.	
ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY	
All the participants in the research will be fully briefed and their participation will be voluntary. I will not use the names of the participants and will, in this way, protect their identities. The information from the students will be kept confidential and personal confessions in the interviews that could harm anyone's reputation will not be shared with others. A black African colleague will act as a check and will peer-review the interviews.	
INTERVIEW THEMES	
1. The value of black African traditions, specifically proverbs, in their current lives	
2. The educational role of proverbs in their past or current lives	
3. The domination of western and global design approaches	
4. The shifting nature of culture	
5. Coping in a multicultural classroom environment	